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School Committee Minutes 04/10/2007

Approved May 22, 2007

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2007

7:30 PM

Present: Sue Sheffler, Chair
Susan Lovelace, Vice Chair
Paul Schlichtman, Secretary
Sean Garballey
Jeff Thielman
Martin Thrope
Kathy Fennelly

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt.: Kevin Hutchinson
Chief Financial Off: Sue Mazzarella
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo
Student Reps: Ella Hartenian

Absent: Sean Conroy

HONOR RETIRING SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

School Committee members and Mr. Glen Koocher, gave presentations of plaque and chairs to the following retiring committee members.

Kathleen Fennelly
Paul Schlichtman
Martin J. Thrope

Regular Meeting called to order at 7:55 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Joanne Contardo would like to continue hosting ASA program without any fees associated with this program.

Chuck Coughlin requested that the record be set straight on the signatures on the Assistant Superintendents contract.

Steve Porretta – parent of 3 children, professional educator at Ottoson spoke about losing teachers at the middle school and asked about coaching position of personnel, data and support personnel, travel outside of district, contracted public relations and if any other alternatives could be made. Also asked why we are cutting teachers when we had an override.

Mike Carters Arlington resident, teacher at the Ottoson Middle school for over 30 years and spoke about the Crisis of Trust and brought up the use of a public relations firm

Larry Greco was very pleased with the positive resolution of Ms. Bouris and thanked the Arlington Community for their support. Mr. Greco acknowledged the postponement of the Superintendent extension of contract until after the election of new school committee members. Mr. Greco also thanked the retiring School Committee members.

Stuart Cleinman thanked the retirees and wanted the committee to support the staff at Arlington Public Schools

Evelyn Smith DeMille – Came out this evening to show appreciation of Mr. Thrope and to thank him for all he has done as a School Committee member. Ms. DeMille also acknowledge Ms. Fennelly and Mr. Schlichtman for there years of service.

CONSENT AGENDA – all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence

**Approval of warrant # 07133 in the amount of \$372,425.16*

**Approval of minutes February 13, 2007, February 27, 2007, March 27, 2007 and April 3, 2007 minutes*

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was Voted to approve the consent agenda

VOTE OF APPROVAL OF OTTOSON MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL CONTRACT

Superintendent Levenson feels very optimistic to renew Ms. Bouris contract for the community, children and staff at the Ottoson Middle School. At the request of School Committee members the five goals of the contract were asked to be read aloud by the Superintendent. The first four goals are common with the Administration team contract:

1. To be an active member of the administrative leadership team.
2. To assist and support the continued implementation of Standards Based Education and the use of teacher-developed common assessments.
3. As instructional leader of the Ottoson Middle School spend time in classrooms and evaluate staff with input and support from relevant department heads.
4. Any elements of the district goals approved by the school committee as they apply to the Ottoson for 2007/08.
5. Lead a broad-based 5-year strategic planning process including staff, District administrators, parents, students, the School Committee, and the community resulting in a written vision based on a middle school philosophy. This planning process will be assisted by the New England League of Middle Schools (or other similar organization acceptable to the Superintendent) and the Walker Partnership Special Education Consulting Group.

The timetable will begin in the fall of 2007 with a written plan and a phased implementation schedule. The plan will address all aspects of the school while remaining consistent with a middle school philosophy. The plan is subject to the approval of the School Committee and Superintendent

All members are in agreement with the contract and thanked Superintendent Levenson with this resolution and congratulated him on finding a positive outcome. The School Committee has confidence in Ms. Bouris and the staff and would like to give them the space they need to move forward.

*On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thielman it was
Voted to approve the contract for the Ottoson Middle School Principal
Vote 7 – 0 unanimous*

PUBLIC HEARING ON 07-08 SCHOOL BUDGET

Mr. Tad Lawcewicz expressed his concern that he would like to see change in the school system

Ms. Barbara Goodman thanked Superintendent Levenson for his work on the budget and noted many communities join Arlington with a deficit and noted that we cannot continue to have overrides and asked the School Committee members for support at the School Funding Rally and asked them:

1. Vote to endorse the full reimbursement of Special Education Transportation
2. to attend the rally
3. to network with others

The Rally is for Stand for Children on School Funding on Wednesday, April 25, 2007 at 12:30 pm at the Boston Common.

*On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Sean Garballey it was
Voted to endorse the Stand for Children Rally at the Boston Common at 12:30 pm on April 25, 2007
Vote 7 – 0 unanimous.*

Mr. Pasquale Tassone, Fine Arts Director, Cheryl Christo and Sabatino D'Agostino came to be heard and give feedback about the proposed user fees related to the Performing Arts Department and was here tonight to ask for fairness and presented a handout on Current Fee Schedule vs. the proposed fee schedule and comparison with the Instrumental Music, Athletics and the ACE program.

Mr. Thielman made a statement to Mr. Coughlin's request during Public Participation t on setting the record straight that the School Committee does sign the contracts of the Assistant Superintendent.

Superintendent Levenson spoke about the fairness of spreading the pain and how difficult it is for all. Some members of the School Committee stressed concern that students will not participate in programs if fees are too high. Ms. Lovelace spoke about imposing an activity fee for all students who participate in after school programs, to share the fees. Mr. Skidmore acknowledged that this could be an interesting way to charge students fairly but noted this can be difficult for student who are already paying athletic fees.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

The School Committee members asked many questions about the budget some of them were related to the Cost Containment Position, a family cap on user fees and class sizes for next year in the classroom, the Social Studies Department Head, the loss of Academic Support at the high school and the non-core positions being cut at the Middle School.

Superintendent Levenson replied that the position of Cost Containment/Purchasing Director would have a salary of \$65,000 and save us over \$100,000 in the first year. The family cap was something that was overlooked and Superintendent Levenson supports a family cap. The fee for Performing Arts will also be reevaluated. The reduction of the Social Studies Department head last year has was not a positive decision but bringing this position back would mean that another position would need to be cut at the Ottoson Middle School. Also, noted that if fees are raised we are saving 5 teacher positions.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Garballey, chair of Policy and Procedures presented to the School Committee with the second Reading of JFAB with the addition of: Students attending the Arlington Public Schools on a J-1 visa shall not be charged tuition by the Arlington Public Schools.

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Mr. Thielman it was

Voted to approve the "Students attending the Arlington Public Schools on a J-1 visa shall not be charged tuition by the Arlington Public Schools.

Vote 5-1, Ms. Fennelly No and Ms. Sheffler abstained

Kathy Fennelly, Chair of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, reported on agenda items presented at the Meeting on March 26, 2007. The CAPP Program, The Library Program and the ACE Program. Ms. Bouvier advocated that the CAPP program has many trained staff willing to commit to this program and would like the Superintendent and the Principals to look into how to incorporate this program back into the curriculum. The Library Program has 1 full time teaching position and four library aids and is looking to increase its staff to support each elementary school and provide additional support and information to students and staff. The ACE Program was discussed and the philosophy of the program was given out in a hand out.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Schlichtman reviewed all correspondence.

NEW BUSINESS

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Garballey it was

Voted to move the 11:00 rule to 11:10 PM

Vote 7 – 0 unanimous

The members of School Committee thanked Ms. Sheffler for all her work the past year as Chair of the Committee and thanked Ms. Fennelly, Mr. Schlichtman and Mr. Thrope for all their years of service on The School Committee Board.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Fennelly it was

Voted to Adjourn at 11:10 PM

Vote 7 – 0 unanimous

Submitted by

Karen Fitzgerald

Administrative Assistant

School Committee